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S E R M O N

Preached at the

O R D I N A T I O N

O F T H E

Reverend SAMUEL SHEPARD,

At Stratham, in New Hampshire, September
25. 1771.

By SAMUEL STILLMAN, A. M.

Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Boston.

T O W H I C H,

The CHARGE, and the RIGHT HAND OF
FELLOWSHIP, delivered at the same Time,
are added.

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THE

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Printed in the

ORDINATION

OF THE

Presbyterian Synod of the

At a meeting in New York, September

By SAMUEL STEPHEN, A. M.

of the Synod of the Presbytery in Scotland

TO WHICH

THE CHURCHES AND THE RIGHT HAND OF

THE LOWER CLERGY OF THE CHURCH

are invited.

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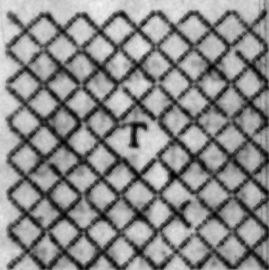
A N

Ordination S E R M O N.



A C T S XIII. 2.

*---The Holy Ghost said, Separate me
Barnabas and Saul for the Work
whereunto I have called them.---*



HE Lord Jesus, in order to carry on the designs of his grace in this apostate world, gave some, apostles : and some, prophets : and some, evangelists : and some, pastors & teachers. * It may not be easy to ascertain the precise difference, between these several officers in the church of Christ ; concerning which great and good men are divided in opinion. The great difficulty, I apprehend, lies in making a proper

* Ephes. 4. 11;

per distinction between *evangelists*, *pastors* and *teachers* ; for *apostles* and *prophets*, are generally allowed to have been *extraordinary* officers, who were confined to the first age of the church. An *apostle* was one who received his authority & qualifications *immediately* from Christ, and had power to work miracles for the proof of his doctrines. Thus *Paul* assures us, that he *neither received the gospel of man, neither was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*. * And after he had received it, he waited not for an *ordinary* call from the church, to preach it, but being *extraordinarily* qualified for, and called to the work of the ministry, he went not up to *Jerusalem* to them who had been *apostles* before him ; but set out for *Arabia*, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

A *prophet* was principally distinguished by his special knowledge of *future events* ; which he foretold with infallible certainty. Such was *Agabus*, mentioned *Acts* 11. 17.

THESE are said to be *extraordinary* or *unusual* officers, because they received their call and authority *directly* from God, and were confined to the apostolic age : Since which time they have ceased. None but such as are led away by a spirit of error and delusion, will pretend, in the present day, to be either *prophets* or *apostles*.

AN *evangelist* is thought to have been a companion and assistant of the apostles ; whose business was

* Gal. 1. 12.

was to preach the gospel in all places to which he *might be sent*. Probably he acted as an *itinerant*, (to use a modern phrase) visiting the churches which had been planted by the *apostles*, for their establishment and edification.

By *pastors* are generally understood those who have the charge of a particular church, and are more immediately confined to it; who are authorized to preach the word, and to administer all the ordinances of the gospel. That there were such officers in the apostolic age, who had the special charge of particular churches, is evident from the following passages of scripture. In *Acts* 14. 2, 3. we read that Barnabas and Paul, *ordained elders in every church* that they visited, after they had departed from *Antioch*. Let it be observed that these elders were ordained in *every church*; consequently *every church* was thus furnished with elders of their own; who were to have a special regard to that particular church in which they were ordained. And when *Paul* arrived at *Miletus*, he *sent* to Ephesus, and called *the elders of the church*. * Remark, they were particularly the *elders of the church of Ephesus*. Why of that church rather than any other, but because they had taken the special charge of it? This sense is confirmed by his address to these elders, ver. 28. *Take heed therefore—to all THE FLOCK over which the Holy Ghost hath made you OVERSEERS*, or bishops: The greek word being the same here

Acts 20. 17.

here with that, which in some places is so rendered. It is apparent that these elders had the charge of a particular flock; and that the Holy Ghost himself had appointed them overseers of that flock. They were therefore under the most solemn obligations more especially to attend to it. I will add to what has been said, the words of St. Peter. *The elders who are among you I exhort—Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.** Here also mention is made of a particular flock, and the elders, or *presbyters* are exhorted to take the oversight of this flock in a special manner. Neither did their attachment to a particular flock, or church of Christ, prevent their making excursions to those places where their ministrations were wanted; seeing every church had a plurality of elders; hence one might be absent at certain times, and the church still supplied.

WITH *pastors* the apostle joins *teachers*. It is a matter of uncertainty, who are designed by *teachers*. Some imagine that they were, as they are called “gifted brethren”; who were employed by the church in *teaching* only; not having authority to administer baptism, or the Lord’s supper. One upon the place observes that he “rather thinks, “that *pastors* and *teachers* intend one and the “same office, that the word *teachers* is only explanatory of the figurative word *pastors* or shepherds; and the rather because if the apostle had “designed

* 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2.

"designed distinct offices, he would have used the
 "same form of speaking as before ; and have ex-
 "pressed himself thus, *and some pastors, and some*
 "*teachers* ; whereas he does not make such a
 "distribution here as there." But whether or no
 the preceding remarks convey true ideas of these
 respective officers in the church of Christ, we are
 confident of this one thing, that the various quali-
 fications for these offices were *given* by Christ, the
 glorious head of the church, *for the perfecting of*
the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the
edifying his body. * As long therefore, as the same
 design may be answered in this sinful world, by the
 gospel ministry, we may expect a succession of
 faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.
 He with whom the office originated, will undoubt-
 edly continue it until the grand end of it's institution
 is fully accomplished : Whose care in this respect is
 clearly manifested in the text. *As they ministered to*
the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate
me Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I have
called them. These two men had been engaged in
 the work of the ministry, long before the transaction
 spoken of in the text took place, as is evident
 in the preceding chapter, consequently this *se-*
paration to the work, cannot intend, what is
 commonly called *ordination*. To suppose this is
 to invalidate *Paul's* extraordinary call to the ap-
 postleship ; by which he was *qualified* for, and
authorized to perform all the parts of the ministe-
 rial office ; sensible of this, he at once set out on
 the discharge of the trust reposed in him, without
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* Ephes. 4. 11, 12.

holding a consultation with those who had been apostles before him. * This *extraordinary* call certainly supersedes that which is *ordinary*; or renders ordination by the interposition of men unnecessary: For who can imagine that a man who had been *ordained* by the Lord Jesus in an *extraordinary* manner, and had officiated many years as an *apostle* by virtue of said *ordination*, should afterwards submit to be *ordained* by men?

AND with respect to *Barnabas*, we read chap. 11. 22—27. that the church at *Jerusalem* sent him to *Antioch* to preach the gospel; which they would not have done, had he not been fully authorized for it. I apprehend therefore that we are to understand by the *separation* of *Barnabas* and *Saul* to the work spoken of in the text, a *designation* of them to that *particular service*, in which they engaged immediately after the solemnity was ended; for having fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto *Saleucia*, &c. The service they now went upon, was by the direction of the Holy Ghost; and which, as one observes, was to preach the gospel to the Gentiles in any, or every place. † The solemnity of prayer and fasting, denotes the anxiety of their brethren that God should go with them, and accompany their labors with success: Their *laying hands on them*, may be expressive of their warm desires, that every necessary blessing should attend them. “This was a ceremony used by the
“Jews,

* Gal. 1. 15,—20.

† Pool's Synopsis in loc.

“Jews, when they wished any blessing or happiness to attend any persons”; * thus it may be thought these prophets and teachers acted on this occasion. Nevertheless the words afford us several leading sentiments, the consideration of which may be useful on the present solemnity.

I. THE *work* to which *Barnabas* and *Saul* were separated.

II. THE *call* to this work ; *whereunto* I have CALLED them.

III. I SHALL take the liberty to treat of *ordination*, or a *separation* to the sacred office, because pertinent to our present purpose, although not intended in the text by *separating Barnabas and Saul*.

I. WE are to attend to the *work* spoken of in the text. Though these men were now to be engaged in a *particular service*, as hath been hinted, still it was in preaching the gospel ; for we read, ver. 5. that after their departure from *Antioch*, they *preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews* : And in the subsequent part of the chapter, that they visited several cities of the *Gentiles*, declaring that *through Christ was preached unto them, the forgiveness of sins* ; and having fulfilled their *work*, meaning that particular service on which they set out from *Antioch*, they returned, and having assembled the brethren, rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the *Gentiles*. But I shall consider the office of a minister of

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Christ,

* Dr. GILL.

† Chap. 14. 26, 27.

Christ, in it's largest sense ; preaching the word being but a part of it.

1. ~~One~~ who is engaged in the work of the ministry, should be a *man of prayer* ; this solemn duty is inseparably connected with his office. Hence when the apostles called the multitude of the disciples unto them, in order to choose seven men, who should officiate as deacons, they assign the following as one reason of such an appointment, *We will give ourselves continually to prayer.** *Luther* was wont to say, that, "three things are of importance to a minister, *meditation, temptation and prayer.*" With these he cannot be unacquainted. If private christians should *pray without ceasing*, much more should he who is engaged in the sacred office, carry on a continual intercourse with a God in Christ. His own body of sin, the greatness of his work, the many trials that attend it, and his felt insufficiency for it, will often lead him to a throne of grace. I mean, if he be one whom God hath called to it. The repeated, and numerous occasions which he will find of drawing near to God in this duty, will lead him from his closet to the congregation, and from the congregation to his closet again. In connection with which duty,

2. Is a diligent studying the living oracles. Hence Paul exhorts Timothy *to study to shew himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*† And in another place, *to give himself wholly to these things,*

* Acts 6. 1,—5.

† 2 Tim. 2. 15.

*things, that his profiting might appear to all.** The things to which St. Paul endeavors to fix Timothy's attention, are *reading, exhortation, and doctrine*; † different branches of his sacred office. *Reading* is of great advantage to the minister of Christ; Thereby he obtains an increase of knowledge, and a growing fitness for his work. Neither do I mean to confine him in this exercise, wholly to the word of God; though *that* will be readily allowed to be the only rule of faith and practice. For there are many human writers both ancient and modern, that may be read with advantage. If St. Paul had read nothing but the scriptures of truth, he could not have brought a citation from the *greek poets*, to corroborate a doctrine he delivered to the *Athenians*; *as certain also of your own poets have said.* ‡ Besides, there are many allusions, or references in the parables, and other parts of scripture, to customs that prevailed among the *Jews, Greeks and Romans*, without a knowledge of which, those parts of the word of God cannot be so amply explained; and which can only be acquired by reading *profane authors*, as they are called. After all, the HOLY BIBLE must be received as the source of divine knowledge, and the only criterion of sacred truth; out of which every minister of Christ should bring forth things new and old. Thus furnished from the oracles of heaven,

3. He will go to the people in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. In the discharge of this part of his office he ought not to
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* 1 Tim. 4. 15.

† Ver. 13.

‡ Acts 17. 28.

shun to declare the whole counsel of God. It is enough for him that any truth is revealed in the holy scriptures, and was preached by the apostles. Satisfied of this he is not to hesitate whether he ought to preach it, lest some persons should make a bad use of it. Thus some talk who profess to believe the doctrine of *election*, and of the *sovereignty* of God in the distribution of his grace. But why were they revealed, and why preached by St. Paul and his brethren, if they were of such dangerous tendency? At least we shall be obliged to confess, that the *first preachers* were as wise and prudent as any of their *successors*; and preached the truth as it is in Jesus. Consequently the nearer we come to the plan of preaching which they adopted, the nearer we come to the truth: and if truth is delivered, we have nothing to fear respecting it's tendency. The word of God shall not return unto him void, but prosper in the thing whereto he sent it. A cursory view of the apostolic preaching will convince us, what they thought the leading points in christianity, viz. *The fall of man*, with it's nature and consequences; and the *glorious recovery by Christ*. These they insisted on with frequency, plainness and zeal: In doing which they were called to treat of faith, repentance, and the various christian practices. For though Christ hath finished redemption, it will be of no saving benefit to any, but those who believe in him: And no man has the faith of God's elect, who is not led thereby to obedience. *Faith without works is dead*. The righteousness of Christ is the only matter of acceptance with God; but no sinner can apprehend it, and derive comfort from it but by faith; and if his faith be genuine, it will
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make him careful to maintain good works. The truth believed is the spring of evangelical obedience.

4. WHEN he hath thus preached the truth, and sinners profess to believe it, he is, upon their application to him, and satisfaction obtained relative to their faith and conduct, to administer the special ordinances of the new testament to them, *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*. This is the order of the commission as Christ gave it to his disciples, *PREACH THE GOSPEL to every creature; he that BELIEVETH and is BAPTIZED shall be saved, &c.* With which agree the following words. *Then they who GLADLY RECEIVED THE WORD, were BAPTIZED.* And when they BELIEVED Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were BAPTIZED, both MEN and WOMEN.†* We ought carefully to attend to the account of these ordinances, as we have it in the new testament, because they are new testament institutions, and to administer them according to the pattern therein left us. The difference that subsists among christians in this matter, as it calls for the exercise of *mutual forbearance*, so it should lead us with the noble *Bereans* to search the scriptures daily, that our faith and practice may be such as God requireth.

5. THEY who have thus believed in Jesus, and have been added to the church, are called the *flock* of Christ; over whom ministers are *overseers*, as such they should watch for their souls as those who must

* Acts 2. 41.

† Acts 8. 12.

must give an account. This part of their duty will lead them not only to teach publicly, but *from house to house*. Private visits among the *flock* are attended with many great advantages. A minister has it more immediately in his power, on such occasions, of removing that *fear* the people are apt to entertain of him ; and that *reserve*, which prevents their conversing freely with him, and of rendering himself familiar and easy of access. By this means he will not only have a door open for greater usefulness, but act more compatible with his character as a *disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus*, and a *preacher* of his religion, than should he endeavor to keep the people of his charge at an awful distance, under a notion of supporting his dignity. In the former case the people will esteem him highly in love for his works sake ; in the latter, they will fear him, but not love him.

In visiting the flock, ministers should be careful not to spend that time among them, which ought to be devoted to reading, meditation and prayer. Without a solemn attention to these things, a preacher will make but a small proficiency in divine knowledge, and will be confined in his preaching to a small circle ; of whom it may be said, " If you hear him once, you hear him always." Whereas he ought to labor to be as a scribe ready instructed in the kingdom of God, bringing forth out of his treasure, things *new* as well as *old*. To such negligence as is hinted at above, some men of the sacred character, are strongly tempted, both by an aversion to confinement, and close thinking, and the persuasions of some of their friends, who, from a fondness

ness for their company, would gladly convince them that much study is unnecessary ; or that they can preach well enough without it. But St. Paul had other views of the work of the ministry, when he cried out, *Who is sufficient for these things ?* And exhorted *Timothy* to give himself WHOLLY to *reading and meditation* that his profiting might appear to all. We may from hence learn most certainly, that one duty should not supersede another : That visiting the flock though a duty should not interfere with reading, meditation and prayer.

6. I SHALL only add under this head, that the elders of the church are to *reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine* ; to preside in the affairs of the church, and continually to go before the flock, as those whom Christ hath counted faithful, having put them into the ministry. They are not to lord it over God's heritage, but to be *examples to the flock in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.* * In the discharge of every duty, they should behave with meekness of wisdom, considering themselves also in the body.

II. THE call to this sacred work comes now under consideration. *The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I HAVE CALLED them.* From which words I remark, that it is essential to the character of a minister of Christ, that he be called by the Holy Ghost. The nature of this call I shall explain, and then shew it's indispensable necessity.

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I. HERE

* 1 Tim. 4. 12.

1. HERE I beg leave to premise, that every man who engages in this office, ought to be previously called out of darkness into marvellous light. In other words he ought to be a *good man*; one who has experienced the influences of the Spirit of God, in opening his blind eyes, and turning him from darkness to light; and from the power of satan unto God. He ought not only to be a man of *gifts*, but *grace*. Though every *real christian* ought not to be a preacher; every preacher ought to be a *real believer*. In fact, if he has never known the plague of his heart, his lost and perishing condition both by nature and practice; and derived peace to his guilty soul from the finished redemption of the Lord Jesus; he is destitute of the first thing requisite to the ministerial office. I do not say, that faith in Christ, or an experience of the gospel on the mind, qualifies a man to preach it: Verily many things besides this, are necessary. But I am obliged to believe both from scripture and the nature of the thing, that no man, let him have what other gifts he will, ought to engage in the ministry, while unregenerate. The office is the same it ever was, so are the ends to be answered by it; the qualifications for it therefore, we may naturally conclude, ought to be the same likewise. It is observable, that Christ the glorious Head of the church, *first converted* the men whom He afterward engaged in the ministry. He did not only endue them with *gifts*, but *effectually called* them by his divine power, *Judas* excepted; whose case we shall hardly be willing to bring as a reason why men should be employed in the ministry, who have no experience of the power of the gospel on
their

their souls. This instance is truly alarming to those who preach the gospel, and should lead them to inquire whether they are not in his condition, having eminent gifts, and traitors to Jesus at the same time. As for St. Paul, he declares that God *called him by his grace, and revealed his Son in him*; in order that he *might preach Him among the Gentiles*. * And when he gave charge to Timothy respecting those who should succeed him in the ministry, he particularly confines him, so far as Timothy could judge, to men of real godliness, *FAITHFUL men, who should be able to teach others also*. † It is also evident, from the very nature of the sacred office, that he who engages in it, ought to be a man of real piety. How shall he teach others the things that belong to the peace, who has never been taught himself? How shall he love a work, which in all its parts is sacred, whose heart remains at enmity with God? To such an one it will be a task, in an attendance to which he will drag on heavily; and rejoice when he can obtain a respite from it. How, think ye, shall a man preach the doctrine of reconciliation, who hath never been reconciled to God through Christ himself? How shall he converse with men condemned by the law, and crying out, *What shall we do to be saved*, seeing he knows not what this meaneth? Or how will he behave towards them, who, believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory? The dejection of the former, he may perhaps attribute to disease of body, and therefore advise the person to call in the help of a physician.

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* Gal. i. 15, 16.

† 2 Tim. 2. 2.

the joy of the latter to an over-heated imagination, or to a religious frenzy. And no wonder should this be the case; for *a natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.** Farther, it may be asked, How he can supremely seek the glory of God, or long for the conversion of sinners, whose own glory or interest lies nearest to his heart; and who has never been really convinced of the value of his own soul, and the infinite importance of salvation from the curse of the law? Surely it is preposterous even to imagine, that any man in a state of unbelief, or unregeneracy, should be calculated to teach others the way to eternal life, seeing he has no true acquaintance with it himself. And what an awful thing will it be to preach an *unknown Christ*, and after having preached to others, to be a *Castaway*! But admitting that the person knows the truth as it is in Jesus, it is necessary in order to his entering on the work of the gospel ministry, that——

2. HE be called to it by the Holy Ghost.—*The work whereunto I HAVE CALLED them.* The same sentiment is implied in the following question, *How shall they preach except they be sent?*† If men run before they are sent, they have no reason to expect that God will either assist, or succeed them; for as no man took on him the honors of priesthood under the law, but he that was called of God, as was *Aaron*, so no man ought to engage
in

* 2 Cor. 2. 14.

† Rom. 10. 15.

in the ministry of the gospel, who has not a divine call to it. This call may be distinguished into *extraordinary* and *ordinary*, *internal* and *external*. I have spoken something of an *extraordinary call* to the ministry, in a preceding part of this discourse, and shall now pass to consider an *ordinary call*; which is thus denominated because the *common* or *usual* method which the Lord now takes, in sending men forth to preach the gospel: And it is,

(1.) *INTERNAL*; which presupposes that the person is a real believer, and that he hath those gifts or qualifications for the work, which are requisite; a particular enumeration of which St. Paul hath given us. * It is absurd to imagine that God would call any man to preach the Gospel, whom he hath not qualified for it in a good degree; and those whom he hath thus qualified, *he powerfully disposes* to that sacred employment, by *inspiring* them with a prevailing desire to devote themselves to it at all events; not from motives of *ease*, *honor*, or *profit*; for ministers are *laborers*, and often set at naught, and have no right to expect more than food and raiment; but from *love* to God, and precious souls. He who thus views the sacred office, and from the above motive longs to engage in it, appears to be *internally* called. The sense that the godly reformers had of this *inward call* to the work of the ministry, is evident in the solemn question still retained in the ordination service of the church of *England*, and put to every candidate previous to the imposition of hands, “Do you truly” that you are *inwardly moved* by the Holy Ghost.”

“to take upon you this office and ministration, to
 “serve God for the promoting of his glory, and
 “the edifying his people ?” To which the candi-
 date replies, “I trust so.”

THE office is from heaven, and Christ Jesus will see that it is maintained until all his elect are called ; and having a free and constant access to the human mind, we cannot, or we ought not to hesitate whether he does thus *move* men to engage in the work of the ministry ; yea, he moves, or inclines some so strongly to it, that they, with *Paul*, become convinced, that wo is unto them if they preach not the gospel. But to prevent a mistake in this affair, it is expedient that the person should observe, how far divine providence concurs with his governing inclination. If God designs a man for the work of the ministry, he will open a door to his regular entrance upon it ; for whatever end he hath in view, he will overrule every circumstance to bring it to pass ; consequently he whom he hath *internally* called, shall be.

(2.) EXTERNALLY called also. The *external* call lies with the church to which the person belongs ; who being satisfied of his grace and gifts, invite him to the exercise of them in a public manner, and appoint him a preacher of the gospel. The choice and approbation of the church, and ordination by virtue of her power, constitutes the *ordinary* call to the ministry ; which is the method, by which men are now sent into it ; and which ought to be observed with great punctuality, in order to prevent such from engaging in it who are destitute

destitute of the requisite qualifications for it. I proceed now,

III. To advert a little to the nature of *ordination*. And here two questions demand our serious attention, *With whom is the power of chusing to the office?* And, *How, or by whom is the person chosen to be invested with it?* As to the first of these, it is generally allowed that every church of Christ, has full power of *chusing* it's own officers; and that it should be so, is agreeable both to reason and scripture. We have a plain account that the church of *Jerusalem* were directed to *look out* from among themselves, fit persons, who should officiate as *deacons*; *or manage the temporal affairs of that church. The *power of chusing*, we see in this instance, was in the church. And it is reasonable that every church should have the same power, with respect to higher officers. Who can know the person's gifts and manner of life, so well as that society to which he belongs? Who so proper to chuse as the very persons who are to sit under his instructions? Shall a man have an undoubted right to chuse his own *physician*, his own *lawyer*, and shall he not have liberty to chuse his own minister? Shall he have full power to act in *temporal* things, and be denied the privilege of chusing in things *spiritual*? By no means. How much alarmed should we be, if any man, or body of men should undertake to determine that we should sit under such a minister and having it in their power, oblige us to pay fine for non-attendance? There is not a man of us, who would not esteem it an imposition, a
horrid

* Acts 6.

horrid violation of our religious rights. And if every man has a right to chuse in this case ; surely a church of Christ or number of believers engaged in covenant, to walk together according to the faith and order of the Gospel, have such power. A very familiar supposition cannot fail of making this matter clear as a morning without clouds, viz. Should our brethren the *Episcopalians*, assume to themselves a power of *chusing* ministers for us *Dissenters* ; we should universally deem it an act of injustice and oppression. Or should the *Dissenters* having sufficient *power*, attempt to chuse for the *Episcopalians*, they would immediately look upon it an infringement of their right of *private judgment*. It cannot but be allowed most reasonable, that every church of Christ should chuse their own officers : This power is committed to them by their adorable Head. “ The choice of such church officers belongeth not to the civil magistrate, as such, or *Diocesan Bishops* or *Patrons* ; for of these, or any such like, the scripture is wholly silent, as having any power therein.” *

THE second question to be considered is, *How or by whom is the person chosen by the church to be invested with the office of a minister of Christ ?* The essence of ordination consists, I apprehend, in the *choice* of the church, and the *acceptance* of the person chosen ; but it was the prevailing practice in the apostolic æra, for the apostles, or elders, to be present at, and to assist in the introduction of the candidate into the office of the ministry. Neither can I find a single example of
ordination

* Cambridge-Platform, p. 21.

ordination in the New Testament, without an ordained elder being present. In Acts 6. the twelve apostles thus addressed the church, *Look YE out among you seven men, &c. whom we may appoint over this business.* This they did, and set them before the apostles. The choice was with the church, but the setting them apart with the apostles. In Acts 14. we read that Barnabas and Saul **ORDAINED** elders in every city. And St. Paul tells Titus in his letter to him, *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ORDAIN elders in every city.* If we determine to make the New Testament our rule in this matter, and to act agreeable to it, we must then allow that the *power of choosing* to office is in the church; and that it is the province of pastors, or elders, to *set apart* such as the church hath chosen; † at the same time they cannot act but in consequence of the invitation or request of the church, over which the candidate is to be ordained. In an extraordinary case, indeed, that is, when a church cannot obtain the assistance of an elder, I imagine that the person may proceed to officiate in the sacred office, by virtue of the *choice* of the church, and his own *acceptance* of it. But that this ought not to be, only in cases of *real necessity*, for the weighty reason given above.

I PASS to some Reflections on the Subject.

1. FROM hence we learn the solemnity and greatness of the ministerial office: They who are engaged in it stand in need of great grace, gifts, and knowledge. Was it thoroughly understood, by

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• Chap. 1. 5.

† See also 1 Tim. 4. 14.

those who have entred upon it, they would more feelingly adopt the language of *St. Paul, Who is sufficient for these things?* And those who have it in view, would, no doubt, proceed with the greatest caution, lest they should run before they are sent. But I mean not to discourage you, my Brother, who design this day to devote yourself to that solemn service. It is great, and you are sensible of your insufficiency for it : But you have the greatest encouragement to go forward. The Lord hath made your way plain before you ; and hath declared that he will be with his faithful servants *always, even to the end of the world.* Go in peace, and the Lord be with you.

2. I OMIT many observations which would be natural here, and only add, That there is a manifest propriety in reminding the people of their duty to their minister on this occasion. The connection between them is *sacred*, and the obligations *mutual*. If he whom you have chosen to serve you in the gospel is to lay himself out in your service, and to give himself *wholly* to it, you ought to endeavor to assist him as much as lieth in your power. Particularly pray for him. When you are admitted to a throne of grace bear him on your minds. Do not expect too much from him ; but consider him as a man of like passions with yourselves. This will incline you to guard against unreasonable prejudices, and to make every proper allowance for the frailties of human nature. Stand by him at all times of trial, and be ready to bear a part of his burdens ; and to advise in all difficult matters which may come before the church. In fine,
Remember

Remember that *they who are taught in the word should communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.* * Do ye not know, says the same apostle in another place, *that they who minister about holy things live of the things of the temple; and they who wait at the altar are partakers of the altar.* Even so hath the Lord ORDAINED, that *they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.* † How plain is the duty of a people to their minister, held forth in these words. It is an ordinance of God, that they and their families should have a comfortable maintenance. Many people look upon what they give to support the gospel-ministry as a *gratuity*; but it is what they have a *right* to expect from the appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ: And I cannot imagine what those christians do with their consciences, who have ability and yet neglect this duty, seeing it is written as with a sun-beam in the oracles of God. A minister is to be continually at the call of the people, he must preach in season and out of season; how then shall he and his family be supported, unless they whom he serves provide for them? I do not urge this matter at present, from any suspicion that you, my Brethren, of these churches, need to be convinced of your duty in this respect, or that you will be backward to discharge it, no; but because it is shamefully neglected in many of the churches of our denomination; an error which I would gladly correct both for the sake of ministers and people. And if any

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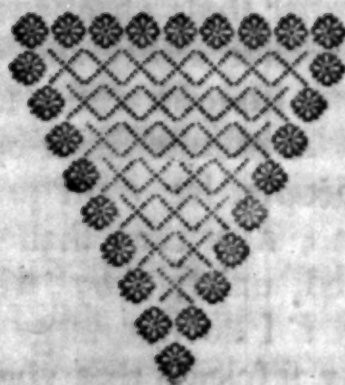
* Gal. 6. 6.

† 1 Cor. 9. 9, 13, 14.

are present, to whom what has been insisted on is more immediately applicable, they ought at least seriously to consider the matter. It becomes us to be conscientious respecting every duty.

NOW to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever !

A M E N.



THE

The CHARGE, by the Reverend
HEZEKIAH SMITH, A. M.

THE transactions of this day are vastly important, as they respect an office that is so in its own nature ; an office truly laudable, honorable, useful and of divine authority, the consequences of which will follow you, my Brother, through eternity.

THE part which devolves upon me, at the close of this exercise, is most solemn and weighty.

PERMIT me therefore in the name of the great Shepherd of Israel, and by the authority of the supreme Head of the Church, to address you in the following manner.

“ I CHARGE thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom : Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Make the sacred scriptures of the Old and New-Testament the man of your counsel. They are pregnant with truths calculated to answer all the important ends

of the gospel-ministry. In these are found the most salutary cordials for babes in Christ ; as well as nourishment for those who are strong in faith. They give directions how to build up, as well as to lay the foundation of a gospel-church. They fully assert the necessity of regeneration, draw the characters of the children of God, and also do furnish the most powerful weapons, through the divine influence, to break down the Bars of prejudice, in the minds of the ungodly against the truth. By these we are instructed how to live in this, as well as what is absolutely necessary to happiness in a future world. Let your preaching and practice be according to these sacred oracles, in order to which, you should not only understand, but enter into the very life and spirit of them.

Be frequent in your addresses to the throne of grace ; for God hears, and delights to answer the prayers of his children ; to him you may go with the utmost freedom, when under any difficulty relative to the affairs of his kingdom in the world. Be importunate with God for direction in the choice of your subjects ; and when your mind is determined, be equally solicitous by prayer that you might rightly understand them, “ that your profiting “ may appear to all.”

LET divine truth deeply and constantly impress your mind—Often meditate upon it—Bring near to view eternal realities, which have a tendency to suppress pride, covetousness and sensuality, those enemies to the growth of a minister, and propagation of vital religion. “ Take heed of popular applau-
“ ses,

“ses, lest they betray you, and prove an impediment to your advances as a christian ; and success as a minister.” Enter into a constant and perpetual war with every flattering lust ; and prove yourself a good soldier of Jesus Christ. “Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.” And let no consideration whatever influence you to depart from the truth.

We charge you to take heed both to yourself, and to your doctrine that it be according to Godliness. For the prosperity of this part of Zion, should your life be continued, depends much upon them. In your preaching frequently insist upon the natures, person, offices, and character of Christ ; together with the necessity of regeneration and sanctification.

In administering the ordinances of the gospel, strictly adhere to the institutions of the New Testament.

AND now from a lively apprehension of a future appearance before the august tribunal of the supreme Head of the Church, we charge you to be faithful and sincere in the constant discharge of the several duties relative to the ministerial office, as they shall be made known unto you. This we do in the presence of the omniscient God, and of Jesus Christ the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and of the elect angels. We being witnesses, do also call this numerous assembly to witness, that you have this day devoted yourself wholly to the work of the ministry, so that for the future, your
time,

time, talents, health, strength and life, are to be all employed in this great and good work.

FINALLY, my Brother, we would deeply impress your mind with these interesting things, by deducing arguments from the glorious perfections of the Deity ; from the transactions of the triune God in eternity, from the incarnation, life, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord ; from the worth of precious and immortal souls ; from the rewards of grace, and punishment of transgressors ; from the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And now, Brother, we commend you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. AMEN.

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The RIGHT HAND of FELLOWSHIP by the Reverend
JAMES MANNING, A. M.

[President of Rhode-Island College.]

THE part, dear Sir, assigned to me by the Council, is, in the name and behalf of these Churches to give you the Right Hand of Fellowship. And from a strict examination into your experiences, sentiments concerning the doctrines of religion, manner of life, and call both internal and external to the sacred office of the gospel ministry, we are satisfied that your motives are laudable in this important undertaking. We therefore most cordially give you this token of brotherhood ; we honor you in the presence of all the people, and hail you a brother-watchman on the walls of Zion ; a fellow-laborer in the vineyard of our Lord : And we promise you all the assistance and advice in our power, and ask the same of you. And now may the God of Blessing bless you, and crown your labors with abundant success ! Amen.

T H E E N D.
